

RM-10787

In support of the NCVEC's petition to eliminate the 5 WPM Element 1 Code requirement:

The current requirement for testing of copy of 5 WPM code has become an outdated and unnecessary element of Amateur Radio. The continued requirement of code testing has caused many Hams to "learn" code long enough to pass an exam, then most will hardly use it again. I know this, because most have told me that. I even know Advanced and Extra class hams who have been licensed for 40 years say that they could not copy code right now if they had to, because they never use it.

CW has evolved into just another mode of amateur radio. 50 years ago it was one of the main modes, and I could understand the requirement of testing as most were using it on a regular basis. There are so many other modes that are available, that one does not have to rely on CW. Testing of CW, to me, seems like we should be testing on Packet, PSK-31, RTTY, FM, SSB, and the other modes of radio. To obtain a higher class license we test on a mode that most have no intention of even using. If one wants to use a mode, they learn how to use it, and then proceed to use it. The same should hold true for Morse code. If I want to use that mode, I will learn it before I use it. I would look pretty silly if I just hooked up a keyer and started pounding out dits and dahs on the CW bands. I would learn it, and then start using it with others before jumping in with both feet.

The elimination of code will not harm the amateur service, the requirement of written tests will still "weed" out the bad apples and the unwilling to follow rules. Most likely we will see a slight "boom" in the amateur population again, as we did when the code was eliminated from the Tech class license. I have tried to get many others involved in amateur radio, but always hear them say "I don't want to learn code." Most are slightly interested after I inform them code is no longer needed for a tech class license. But they are then disappointed when I say it is still required for General and higher licenses. They then ask "Why is it needed for General and higher, but not for Tech?" My answer is "I really do not know."

Since Sept. 11, many want to help support their community and country. Some have joined volunteer fire depts., others joined the military. Many more could help with communications, and would be more willing if the "test" of an outdated and little used mode was eliminated. Sure, today they could get their tech class license, but what is the thinking on allowing someone to use several modes on VHF and UHF and not use them on the lower frequencies? It does not make any sense to me. As a Tech, I can use phone on 2 meter SSB, but I cannot use Phone on 40 meters SSB? Am I not good enough on 2 meters to talk on 40? The same rules apply on both bands, so why could I not use those modes on all of the bands for the same purpose?

Again I support the RM-10787 petition for eliminating the Element 1 code test requirement. Please give it your consideration. The local and amateur community will greatly benefit from it.

Sincerely,  
Derek Augsburger, W9RYN